

REMARKS

This Amendment is intended to fully respond to the Office Action mailed October 31, 2006. In that Office Action, claims 1, 2, 4, 6-22, 24, 26, 27, 29-33, 50 and 51 were examined and claims 1, 2, 4, 6-20, 22, 24, 26, 27, 29-33, 50 and 61 were rejected; and claims 21 and 22 were objected to. Claims 1, 2, 4, 6-13, 24, 26, 27, 30, 32, 33, 50 and 51 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Staelin (USPN 5835777) in view of Madany (USPN 6493870); claims 14-20, 29 and 31 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Staelin in view of Madany as applied to claim 1, and further in view of Burrige (USPN 6918106); and claims 21 and 22 were objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Reconsideration of these rejections, as they might apply to the original and amended claims in view of these remarks, is respectfully requested.

In this Response, claims 1, 24, 26, 50, and 51 have been amended; claim 22 has been canceled; and no new claims have been added.

Claim Objections

Claims 21 and 22 were objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Independent claims 1, 24, 26, 50, and 51 have been amended to include all of the limitations of claim 22, and claim 22 has been cancelled. In light of Examiner's remarks, independent claims 1, 24, 26, 50, and 51 are now allowable. Furthermore, all other outstanding claims are allowable because they depend from independent claims 1, 24, 26, 50, or 51. Additionally, the Office Action's 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) rejection is moot in light of the amendments. Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner issue a Notice of Allowance for all outstanding claims.

Conclusion

This Amendment fully responds to the Office Action mailed on October 31, 2006. It is recognized that the Office Action may contain arguments and rejections that are not directly addressed by this Amendment due to the fact that they are rendered moot in light of the

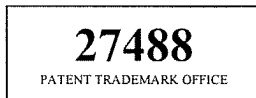
preceding arguments and amendments in favor of patentability. Hence, the failure, if any, of this Amendment to directly address an argument raised by the Examiner should not be interpreted as reflecting the Applicant's belief that such argument has merit. Furthermore, the claims of the present application may include other elements, not discussed in this Amendment, which are not shown, taught, or otherwise suggested by the art of record. Accordingly, the preceding arguments in favor of patentability are advanced without prejudice to other bases of patentability.

It is believed that no further fees are due with this Response. However, the Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any deficiencies or credit any overpayment with respect to this patent application to deposit account number 13-2725.

In light of the above amendments and remarks, it is believed that the application is now in condition for allowance, and such action is respectfully requested. If the Examiner believes a telephone conference would advance the prosecution of this application, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned at the below-listed telephone number.

Respectfully submitted,

Date: January 31, 2007



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Tadd F. Wilson". The signature is fluid and cursive, written over a horizontal line.

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